



PRESS RELEASE

Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation *Chief Richard Weber*

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IRS – Criminal Investigation

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Two Louisiana Residents Indicted for Involvement in Stolen Identity Tax Fraud Scheme

A federal grand jury sitting in New Orleans returned an indictment on Jan. 29 against two Tangipahoa Parish, Louisiana residents, charging them with federal crimes related to filing false income tax returns using stolen identities, Acting Assistant Attorney General Caroline D. Ciralo of the Justice Department's Tax Division and U.S. Attorney Kenneth A. Polite of the Eastern District of Louisiana announced today. The indictment was unsealed today after the last defendant was arrested.

Alicia Washington aka Alicia Keith, 40, and Jackie Chaney aka Jackie Scott, 47, were charged with one count of a multi-prong conspiracy to defraud the United States and to commit theft of public money, wire fraud and aggravated identity theft; five counts of wire fraud and 11 counts of aggravated identity theft. Washington was arrested Thursday and Chaney was arrested today.

As alleged in the indictment, Washington and Chaney conspired together and with others to prepare false tax returns using stolen identities. Washington is alleged to have obtained several Electronic Filing Identification Numbers and used them to electronically file false tax returns with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) that requested tax refunds. Washington, Chaney and others received the fraudulently obtained tax refunds in the form of U.S. Treasury checks or on prepaid debit cards in the names of other individuals. It is further alleged that Washington and Chaney conspired with others to convert the U.S. Treasury checks into cash.

If convicted, Washington and Chaney face a statutory maximum sentence of five years in prison for the conspiracy charge, 20 years in prison for each count of wire fraud and a mandatory two years in prison for each count of identity theft, which will be imposed in addition to any other term of imprisonment they receive. They also face substantial monetary penalties, supervised release, and restitution.

Acting Assistant Attorney General Ciralo and U.S. Attorney Polite commended special agents of IRS Criminal Investigation, who investigated the case and Assistant U.S.

Attorney Hayden Brockett of the Eastern District of Louisiana and Trial Attorney Lauren Castaldi of the Tax Division, who are prosecuting this case.

An indictment merely alleges that crimes have been committed and the defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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